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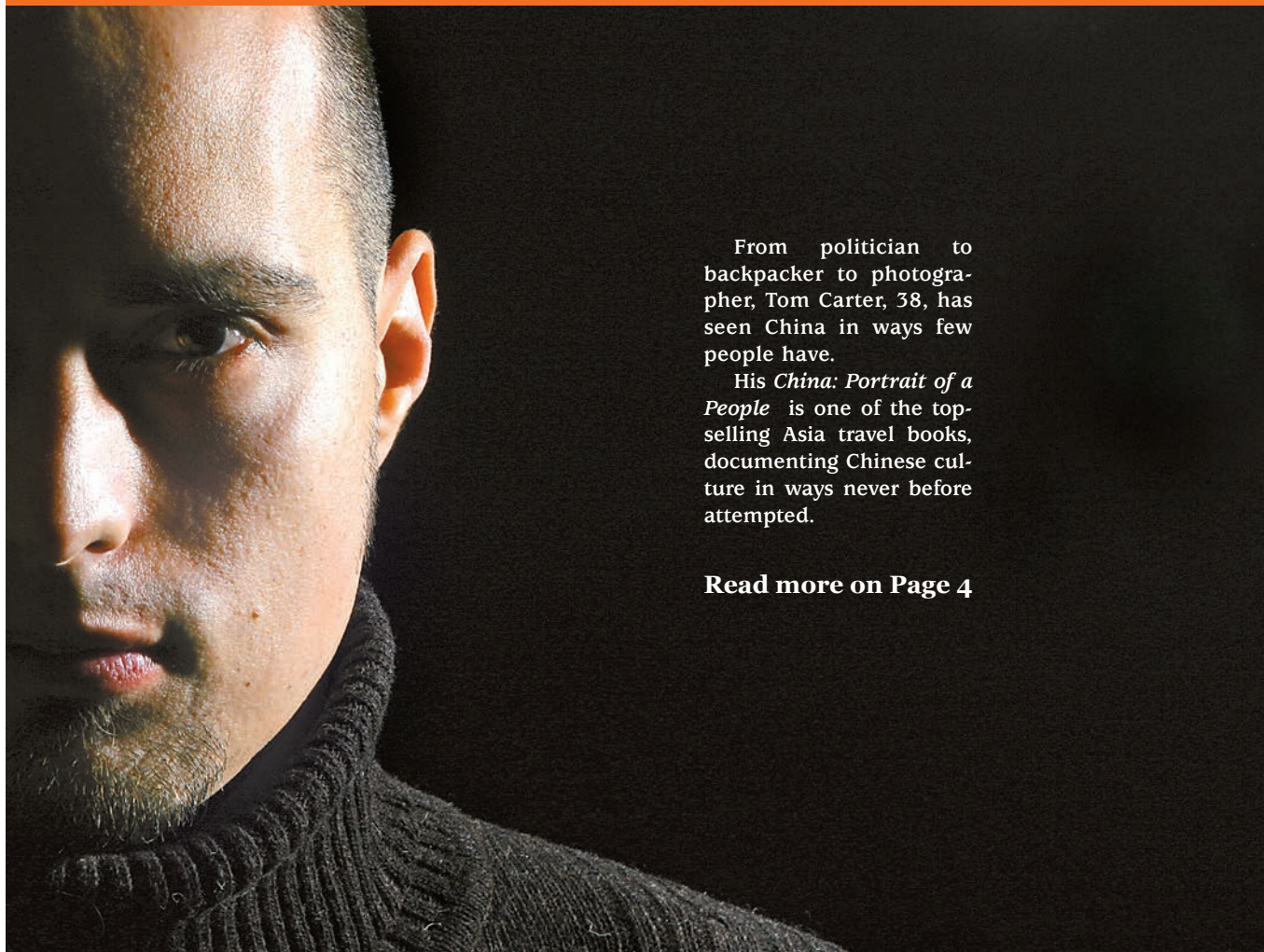
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北京青年报
BEIJING YOUTH DAILY



Seeing China



From politician to backpacker to photographer, Tom Carter, 38, has seen China in ways few people have.

His *China: Portrait of a People* is one of the top-selling Asia travel books, documenting Chinese culture in ways never before attempted.

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Baby love

Young parents play matchmaker for their infants

By Zhao Hongyi

While many young professionals are busy seeking brides or grooms of their own, young parents are using the Internet to seek out future partners for their infants.

The leaders of the trend seem to be young mothers who are eager to engineer new social circles that will lead their child to a desired match.

The wave reflects the challenges facing the next generation of young parents: China's little emperors have little hope of finding an empress in a world with few playmates and an increasingly unequal birth rate.



Policies for population control leave many babies without the support of friendship or siblings.
CFP Photo

'Baby marriages'

Tianya.cn, one of the most popular discussion forums, recently ran an advertisement for a new commercial sub-forum designed to help young mothers find future mates for their children.

The community drew more than 1,000 individual and 200 family registrations during its first week.

"So far, more than 40 babies have found partners through the forum," said Wang Liping, the forum's supervisor. "The youngest was a six-month-old boy who we paired with a three-month-old girl."

But it's not the children who are interested in the forum: it's the mothers.

"My son is so pitiful," said a mother posting as LALALA at Tianya.cn. "He has to play alone at home all the time."

"It would be romantic if he had a playmate who could become his wife some 20 or 30 years from now," she said.

"My goal is to build a circle of friends that gives my son a chance to meet little girls from the beginning," said a single mother surnamed Xue. "I hope it will help him learn to interact with girls in the future."

Xue grew up in a wealthy family under an overbearing mother. The experience made it difficult to interact with men throughout her 20s and early 30s. All attempts

to introduce her to potential suitors failed.

"I don't want my son to have the same experience," Xue said.

In seeking out mates for their children, the young parents are also hoping to widen their own social circles.

One mother surnamed Li said she hoped to meet friends who shared her interests so they could vacation together with their children.

"It could be a nice relationship for both families, even if the children never end up together," she said. "It's also another way to fulfill my dream of having both a boy and a girl."

Celebrity trends

The matchmaking trend owes a lot to celebrity leaders.

Hong Kong actress Cecilia Cheung recently met with TV host Dee Shou in Taiwan during the Spring Festival holiday to introduce her two sons to Shou's two daughters.

The two mothers said they planned to set up a "baby marriage" between the eldest daughter Elly Xu and the eldest son Lucas Tse, four and five years old respectively.

It didn't take long for young professionals on the mainland to start mimicking the celebrities.

But rather than arrange traditional "baby marriages" for their chil-

dren, they are hoping to create new social circles.

Baby marriages have a long history in China and were practiced as recently as a century ago by the wealthy and educated. The practice collapsed after the end of the Qing Dynasty and the founding of the Republic in 1911.

When the government passed a new marriage law in 1951, two years after the founding of the People's Republic, the last traces of the tradition vanished.

Since the country enacted its family planning policy in the late 1970s, limiting each urban couple to one child, the practice has found a new purpose.

The past 30 years have seen the policy widely criticized for contributing to the nation's gender imbalance, instilling in children a selfish character, reducing independence and inspiring violence.

Critics say that the "little emperors" of the 1980s have distorted concepts of life and marriage. Many put a mate's wealth, family background and property ownership ahead of compatibility or quality.

The ever-escalating demands of marriage have many young parents concerned about the future of their children and trying to make the necessary arrangements as early as possible.

Supporters and opponents co-exist

"This new 'baby marriage' is more about social networking than traditional concepts," dinosaurMM posted on her Weibo microblog. "We shouldn't pass up the chance to widen our circles and find more friends for our kids and ourselves."

Another user, beauty0000, said it reminded her of childhood games of exchanging love keepsakes that she remembered as "fun and mysterious."

But this phenomenon has many opponents.

"Baby marriage will be detrimental to the children. They make enough friends in kindergarten," 125478QQ said.

"I feel sick even hearing about this!" @fortunatGG said. "I would rather let my kid grow up naturally and just teach him what to be cautious about. That's enough!"

Experts opposed the trend and encouraged young parents to let their children grow up in a natural environment rather than limiting them to engineered relationships.

But Wang Jun, a professor of social science at Peking University, said the proponents of baby marriage do have one thing right: children need wider social circles.

"It's like taking them to participate in a community gathering," he said.

Brief

Writers sue Apple

Twenty-two Chinese authors have filed a claim against US-based Apple, alleging its App Store has sold unlicensed copies of their books.

The group, the Writers Rights Alliance, petitioned Apple last year to halt electronic distribution of their books and previously persuaded Baidu, the country's largest search engine, to stop publishing their material on its Baidu Library.

The writers are seeking 50 million yuan in compensation from Apple, saying the firm sold pirated versions of 95 of their books via its online store, Xinhua reported without stating where the claim had been filed.

"As IP holders ourselves, we understand the importance of protecting intellectual property, and when we receive complaints we respond promptly and appropriately," Apple spokeswoman Carolyn Wu said.

The Writers Rights Alliance could not be reached for comment. Foreign companies have complained for years about lax enforcement of intellectual property rules by China, and a growing number of Chinese copyright holders are now also pressing for better protection.

Man dies of starvation

The first university graduate from a village in Hubei Province was found dead last week after subsisting on a diet of instant noodles and stolen vegetables.

The 42-year-old Wang Xiaolin of Shiyanyun County was found dead in his home March 12 after a neighbor saw him through the window. No one is sure which day he died.

His high school Chinese teacher remembered Wang as a good student with beautiful handwriting. Wang was admitted to Yun County's top high school and became the first person from his village to attend college. He earned a teaching degree in 1995 and began working at a school in Yun County.

Wang's teaching days were short-lived, and he quit soon after starting work. He moved back to his widowed mother's home and reportedly refused to help with farm work, and once beat his mother until her bones broke. Following the fight, his mother moved in with her daughter.

After his mother moved out, Wang reportedly became even lazier. He never cooked, always eating raw vegetables.

Wang's cause of death is unknown, though villagers said they believe he died of malnutrition. (Agencies)

Crisis of trust

Failing the consumer could be a fatal blow

By Huang Daohen

As young consumers become more assertive, companies are learning the hard way that trust takes years to build and seconds to break.

Even after years of research and considerable cash investments to develop their brands, many companies are finding their images ruined when they fail their customers.

McDonald's under fire

Lillian Xiao was shocked to learn the McDonald's at Sanlitun had closed due to food safety concerns.

But the 25-year-old was less concerned about the questionable operations of the fast food giant than finding somewhere else to spend her lunch hour.

"I know it's junk food, but McDonald's is my favorite," Xiao said. "It's convenient, and is among the best in terms of sanitation."

China Central Television (CCTV), however, reported otherwise.

In its annual "3.15" Evening Report late last Thursday, CCTV aired an undercover report showing that McDonald's Sanlitun branch had a number of dishonest and unsanitary practices.

The reporter, who claimed to have been embedded in the branch for more than six months, said it was a normal practice for employees to sell stale food.

"Despite the company's 30-minute limit, chicken wings were often sold 90 minutes after they were cooked," the report said.

Workers were caught altering the expiration times on the packaging. Hamburger patties that fell on the ground were picked up and reused.

"No McDonald's restaurant would actually discard [stale food]," one worker was quoted by CCTV as saying. "They would smirk at the mere suggestion."

Reporters followed local police for a surprise inspection of the outlet's food handling and storage procedures. It was ordered closed shortly after the police left.

Late last Friday, the Food and Drug Administration also sent a group of health investigators to the outlet to formally order the company to act in accordance with food-safety



Police ordered the McDonald's branch in Sanlitun to suspend its business after their investigation.

laws and to boost employee awareness.

McDonald's China issued an apology on its Chinese website one hour after the CCTV report, saying that the incident was isolated and that the company would enhance its management to ensure strict compliance with food safety standards at all its outlets.

"We will immediately investigate this store and will mete out harsh punishments," the statement said.

McDonald's China has been involved in a series of food scandals in recent years. In 2010, the company was exposed for serving fried chicken that was tainted with mud, rubber and oil-like substances.

Foreign brands singled out?

McDonald's wasn't alone last Thursday night.

A Carrefour outlet in Zhengzhou, Henan Province was exposed to have sold expired chicken and mislabeled common chicken as more expensive.

Carrefour China apologized the following day, saying that it has sent a team to investigate the incident and punish the employees involved.

The quick apologies do merit another question: why is Chinese media so obsessed with finding faults in only foreign companies?

Many worried that foreign companies face increasing operational pressure in China, and that joint ventures are not being treated equally.

Zhi Shuping, head of the country's quality watchdog General Administration of

Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine, said the government expects all companies to obey the same regulations.

"The government sees both foreign and domestic firms as Chinese enterprises. Both must be accountable for any violations of our nation's laws," Zhi said Tuesday at a press conference in Beijing.

Zhi said that CCTV's "3.15" report also exposed major domestic brands like China Merchants Bank and China Telecom for breaching the law.

"The exposure is quite balanced," he said, adding that among all the problem products exposed in recent years, domestic companies accounted for a bigger share.

Erin Yao, senior analyst with local research firm Qingxue, agreed. "The reason foreign brands are targeted more often is because their practices – business related or not – are always being scrutinized by both the government and the general public," she said.

Yao said Chinese consumers were infatuated with foreign brands, especially when the country opened up in the 1980s.

"They automatically assume foreign goods were of better quality," she said. "That magnifies their dishonest behavior."

Maintaining the trust

CCTV's "3.15" report, an annual program marking World Consumer-Rights Day, was previously used as an educational tool to help consumers identify fake goods.

The influence it has now indicates that domestic con-

sumers still have limited channels to express their disappointment, Yao said.

But that does not mean foreign companies wanting to get a slice of the market can be at ease. "Foreign companies that do business in China can see their brand collapse if disaster happens," Yao said.

According to a survey by Qingxue, young consumers in China are becoming more assertive.

Of more than 1,000 college students surveyed, almost half said they would appeal to consumer rights authorities if they felt their rights were infringed, and some 38 percent said they would go to the media.

To maintain consumers' trust, companies should pay attention to quality and adapt their products to suit consumer habits, Yao said.

Procter & Gamble, a well-established foreign brand in the country, said it redesigned its Pampers diapers. The company found that Chinese babies had thighs that were, on average, one centimeter wider than those in the US market.

"We start from the consumer. The consumer is the boss," Daniela Riccardi, president of Procter & Gamble China, was quoted by Xinhua as saying.

In the same report, as many as 46 percent of respondents say they would trust a brand more if they experienced or observed an online campaign through Weibo.

"Though microblogging services like Weibo are quite new, they have already affected people in many ways, including influencing how they shop," Yao said.

Market watch

Service the next big thing

As the government urges the country's 1.3 billion people to open their wallets and boost domestic demand, hotel chains, supermarkets and other service providers are preparing to give investors a fresh shot at the country's growth.

The State Council hopes to boost the service sector's GDP contributions to 47 percent by 2015, up from 43 percent in 2010. This would still be well below the US' service sector, which accounts for two-thirds of the country's economy.

For investors seeking longer-term profits, services that cater to the growing middle class offer an opportunity to cash in on a shift in consumption patterns as Chinese consumers move up the value chain, analysts said.

"There's a lot of pent-up demand for services due to supply constraints," said David Cui, Bank of America-Merrill Lynch's Shanghai-based chief China equity strategist.

Policymakers plan to increase domestic spending to offset a reliance on exports and have outlined plans to narrow the rural-urban divide and boost wages for 158 million migrants. The service sector is vital to future job growth, they said.

More private firms enter state's sectors

The government is planning to lift bans on private companies operating in certain state industries.

"We will encourage private firms to invest in railways, finance, urban development, energy, telecommunications, education and medicine," Zhang Ping, chairman of China's National Development and Reform Commission, said March 18 at a Beijing seminar.

"We are confident and we are capable of continuing our development while maintaining economic growth," he said. Zhang also said that making people richer is the government's priority because doing so will stimulate the nation's economy.

A growing wealth gap and public recognition of official corruption have posed challenges for the central government, which is hoping to maintain fast economic growth while establishing a sound economic foundation. **(Agencies)**



Tom Carter

Venturing China

American photographer backpacking through China to document its people

By Han Manman

American Tom Carter, 38, was once fascinated by politics and confident it would become his career. But the deeper he delved into the political world, the more he found himself wanting out.

Ten years ago, he decided to try another way of life: backpacking on the road. Since then, he has backpacked through many countries, including every province in China. He's learned more about the world from his travels than he ever did doing politics.

"Too many foreigners and tourists come to China only to see a few famous sites or live in a single city like Beijing or Shanghai, then they leave without ever really knowing the country or its people," Carter said. "But I wanted to see it all."

That's exactly what he did. Carter has traveled more than 56,000 kilometers across all 33 provinces, stopping at more than 200 cities and villages.

Carter was born and raised in San Francisco, which has the highest population of overseas Chinese in North America. Under such an environment, he was always curious about Chinese culture and hoped to someday explore Chinese culture.

But before he could, he had to get off his career track of politics.

"The deeper I became involved by politics, the more disenchanted I became with it," Carter said. "I wanted to make a difference in the world, but all the politicians wanted was to make money."

He decided to "peek over the fence" and travel the world.

He spent one and a half years backpacking across Latin America until he ran out of money. It was then when he saw an advertisement for teaching English in China. He saw it was an opportunity to travel to China and get paid for it.

"I love to travel, and more specifically, I love to drift around aimlessly and get lost in new countries, to totally immerse myself in the culture and society," he said.

Carter arrived in China in 2004. After his contract expired, he left the city to begin his travels.

His goal, from the start, was to see all of the country.

Every moment of Carter's trek across China offered new challenges, from trying to understand local dialects to navigating entirely new regions.

"During my first spin



Tom Carter has traveled across all 33 provinces in China to document its people.

Photos provided by Tom Carter

across China, I was entirely alone: no translator, no guide, no transportation or accommodations provided," he said. "And I loved every minute of it, even when I was pounding on the walls in frustration or pulling my hair out."

He has plenty of memories.

He still remembers that when walking the Kora around Mount Kailash deep in western Tibet, he collapsed from altitude sickness and exhaustion at the 5,600-meter Drolma-la Pass. A young Tibetan woman on her third Kora around the mountain picked him and carried his heavy backpack the rest of the way.

Another time, when Carter was in northern Heilongjiang Province in a small town called Mohe, the temperatures dipped to -30 C. He couldn't stop shivering while on the bus. Two old women sitting on either side of him took their coats off and draped them over him and huddled around him to keep him warm.

"I have often seen this kind of generosity in rural areas, but it happens far less in urban places," he said. The gesture touched him immensely.

After finishing his journey around China, he backpacked across Japan and India. And then he returned to China to live.

In the past six years, Carter has watched the country change in ways that make it poised to eclipse the US, Carter said. He called China's current era the "Change Dynasty."

But he's also witnessed thousands of years of history get bulldozed, which breaks his heart.

"I can't say that I agree with all of China's progress; it's a real shame to see so much of what made China unique erased so that the cities can look exactly the same as they do in America," he said. "But I am very impressed by how swiftly it has all happened right before my eyes."

The China journey has also

given Carter a deep understanding of how life and humanity varies from province to province.

"If I had just come to China and stayed in, say, Shanghai or Beijing the entire time, then I would never have the right to claim to be an authority on Chinese culture," he said. "This is what I don't understand about so many foreign journalists, authors and so-called 'experts' and Sinologists here who claim they know what they are talking about when the fact is they never actually leave their little bubbles."

Carter tells his friends who come to China to leave the guidebook at the hotel and just "get lost and drift around." Some of the best places in China are the ones not found in guidebooks, he said.

As a photography enthusiast, Carter has taken note of the physical differences between the people of each province; he notices how facial features,

skin tones and body sizes vary.

These differences are depicted in his book of photographs called *China: Portrait of a People*, which has become a top-selling Asia travel book.

Carter said he has seen dozens of coffee table books that feature famous sites and beautiful landscapes of China, but few focus specifically on its people.

His book features 888 images of aspects of daily life in China.

"No other photographer has ever visually documented Chinese culture as extensively as I have in this book, and I am quite proud of that fact," he said. "Every single day in China contains at least one memorable experience. Many are happy, some have been sad."

"I've accomplished things in China that I never could have back in America ... I might not be a wealthy person, but my life is rich with experience, and I'll take those memories over money any day."

Palestinian charity sale draws support from Chinese

By Wu Tong

The Palestinian embassy closed a charity sale half a month ahead of schedule because it ran out of stock.

Officials said they were touched by the enthusiasm of Chinese visitors, who swept up all the goods. The sale was used to raise awareness of living conditions of Palestinian refugees.

First step

This was the first time the embassy held such a charity event in China for Palestinian refugees. The original plan was for the sale to last from March 4 to April 3.

"We completely underestimated the amount of people that would come," said Amjad Abuhait, the first secretary of the embassy. According to the Palestinian embassy, there were 2,000 to 3,000 visitors in the past 10 days, most of whom were university students.

"They showed great interest in our activity. I want to say thank you to all the people who supported us," Abuhait said.

Most of the goods on sale are handicrafts made by Palestinians, including kerchiefs, embroideries and traditional tableware. The prices of the goods vary, "But they all have been sold out since a few days ago," Abuhait said.

All proceeds will be used to help Palestinian refugees, especially to improve children's living conditions. The money will be delivered directly by the Palestinian embassy to the refugees without the involvement of any other countries and organizations, Abuhait said.

"The money will be especially used to improve education facilities and sanitary conditions for the children," Abuhait said.

The surprising feedback from the Chinese community has motivated the embassy to hold more events.

"We will study from this case, and hopefully in another two months, we will hold a charity dinner for Chinese people," Abuhait said.

Life in the camps

Abuhait said he once visited a camp as an administrative official. "I think it would be better if I put this way: life in these camps has never been easy," he said.

Palestinian refugee camps were established after the Arab-



All proceeds will go to Palestinian refugees, especially to improve children's living conditions.

Photo provided by Mohamad Wael Hamidah

Israeli War in 1948 to accommodate Palestine refugees who lost their homes. According to UN statistics, the refugee camps are scattered throughout different places in the Middle East, including Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and Gaza strip, with nearly 5 million people registered.

"I am a refugee from the refugee camp in Damascus, Syria," said Mohamad Wael Hamidah, an embassy official in charge of educational and cultural affairs. "In recent years, life in the camps has improved compared with the past, but it's still not good enough."

Wael Hamidah said that the living conditions are different among different camps. "The situations in some camps are very bad—children cannot have access to basic education. Some are better, but not as good as you may think."

"We Palestinians really appreciate what the countries where the camps are located have done for us," Wael Hamidah said. "But those countries have their own people needed to be taken care of. We Palestinians still need to do more to help our own."

He said the embassy would pick two or three camps in Gaza and Lebanon as their first targets to help. "It is a step-by-step plan. We need to start with the most urgent ones," Wael Hamidah said.

Under the management of

the UN, Palestinian refugee camps have been drawing more attention from the global community. The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) are the main organizations providing relief, while other countries have increased aid as well.

"The future for Palestinian camps will be better," Wael Hamidah said. "But we still have a long way to go."

Chinese enthusiasm

Like Abuhait, Wael Hamidah was also impressed by the Chinese support. He said that embassy personnel tried returning the favor by lowering the prices for students who otherwise wouldn't be able to purchase a certain item.

"After all, we are not doing business," Wael Hamidah said. "It's about charity, letting more Chinese people know about the activity and the camps."

Chinese curiosity toward Palestinian culture has left a great impression on Wael Hamidah as well. "Palestine is famous for its olive trees," he said. "And I remember that a visitor once came to me and asked me why Yasser Arafat, our former leader, used to say, 'I'm coming with the olive branch in my hand' in UN meetings. And I told him it is because in our culture, olive

trees mean peace."

As an IT salesman with a great interest in Palestine and charity, He Qing is a typical Chinese enthusiast. "I have a friend who is the acquaintance of an embassy official," he said. "Since the embassy doesn't have a Weibo account, my friend helped them post the information online. Then I saw it and decided to come."

When he went on March 8, many goods had already been sold out. "I bought a kerchief and a handmade bracelet, which were very beautiful," he said. "I think it is my way of showing my support for the refugees in the Palestinian camps. If the embassy would hold more charity events in the future, I will surely attend."

Ma Lin, a senior at Minzu University of China, set up an online account to accept donations on the Palestinian embassy's behalf.

"I have a lot of friends who really want to help but cannot go to the embassy," Ma said. "After checking with the embassy, I decided to set the account. The money I get will all be transferred to the embassy, paying for the education facilities and improvement of sanitary conditions for the children in the Palestinian refugee camps."

Ma planned to transfer the money last week, but the money kept rolling in.

"Although I kept telling

people the deadline was the end of last week, they still kept sending money," Ma said.

So far, Ma said he has received nearly 20,000 yuan. The money will be transferred at the end of the week.

The embassy didn't have its own Weibo account until just recently, so it was Huang Xinya, a health service manager, who spread the news online.

"A friend of mine in the embassy told me about the sale," said Huang, who has participated in several charity events in the past. "I searched online but found the embassy didn't have a channel to promote the activity, so I decided to help them."

Since, Huang has done a lot of research on Palestinian history. As she learned more about Palestinian culture, she began to feel the weight of more responsibility.

"It becomes more of a mission for me to help them after I read about their history," Huang said. "People asked me if I was part of the embassy. I did my best to help answer their questions."

Huang said more people deserve to know about the Palestinian history.

With the help of Huang and others, the Palestinian embassy opened its Weibo account on March 19. Further information will be released there.

"It's worthwhile to do this," Huang said. "My efforts won't stop here."

Beijingers celebrate St. Patrick's Day by getting drunk and merry



Happy St. Patrick's Day !



The menu at this year's Irish Ball included yellow fin tuna, lamb rump and Baileys brulee. Photo by Ellen Wong

By Anthony Tao

It usually doesn't take a special occasion to get Beijing's expats to hit the bars, but there's nothing like St. Patrick's Day to bring out the inner alcoholic in casual drinkers.

"To really enjoy the day, you need to really celebrate the Irish culture," said David Archer, teacher at an international school. "So I drink Guinness and Baileys. Sometimes together."

The Christian holiday, celebrated every March 17, dates back more than 1,000 years. It was traditionally observed in honor of the fifth-century missionary Saint Patrick, who, while not Irish, was credited with helping spread Roman Catholicism across Ireland.

But modern St. Patrick's Day celebrations have mostly been stripped of this religious context. For most people, it's just an excuse to get drunk...really drunk.

"I do usually go out, but only because most my life I've been surrounded by Irish descendants whose only real link to Ireland is their last name and the fact that they drink themselves, well, Irish every St. Paddy's Day," said Kris Pickett, an English teacher and student of Chinese.

The holiday is observed in several countries. In the UK, Manchester holds a two-week



Irish Ball: always an occasion to dress up.

Photo by Ellen Wong

festival before St. Patrick's Day. In Florence, Italy, the "Festa Irlandese" is 10 days of fun. Even in South Korea, foreigners get together to put on a parade in Seoul.

The first St. Patrick's Day parade happened in the US in 1762, with the biggest one now happening in Dublin. Perhaps the city known for the best St. Paddy's Day tradition is Chicago, which dyes the Chicago River green for this occasion.

"It has a long, storied tradition here in Chicago," said Jeff Orcutt, who's currently a project manager in Chicago after spending eight years in China. "However, sometimes

it seems like the holiday is just an excuse for Caucasians to get dangerously drunk the world over."

That's certainly the case in Beijing. Bar and restaurant owners stocked up on liquor and beer – particularly Guinness – in preparation for the weekend.

Bar Blu had buy-one-get-one deals on Guinness, Jameson and Bailey's. Temple had buy-two, get-one-free deals on bottled Guinness and the Beijing Beatles playing live music. Union offered a special Guinness happy hour from 4 to 8 pm.

The bar that was really packed, though, was Paddy



At the Irish Ball
Photo by David Archer



A live band provided entertainment late into the night at the Irish Ball on St. Patrick's Day Saturday.

Photo by Ellen Wong

O'Shea's, always a hotspot on St. Paddy's Day. Business was certainly helped by the fact that Ireland was playing England in rugby in the Six Nations that night.

The biggest event of the night, however, happened at the Renaissance Hotel, where Irish Network China was hosting the 20th annual Irish Ball, with free-flowing Guinness, Murphy's, Jameson, Bailey's and everything else. Tickets cost between 900 and 1,000 yuan per person (depending on how many people were at the table).

"I hobbled my way around the Irish Ball," said Craig Coulstring, who attended the event after playing rugby with the Beijing Devils. "That was until the whiskey kicked in and I was River Dancing with the best of them."

"The band was fun and we danced up a storm," added

Ellen Wong, who was at her third Irish Ball.

Those who didn't go out on Saturday made sure to hit the bars the night before.

"I made it out Friday and in my zealous anticipation for St. Paddy's Day, I drank enough to keep me bedridden most of the holiday," Pickett said.

He was at the Irish bar The James Joyce when midnight struck and the bartender yelled, "Happy St. Patrick's Day!" With that, everyone began serving up toasts, and a stranger bought Pickett an Irish car bomb.

There was one rather significant segment of the population that found nothing special about the day, however.

"As far as I know, Chinese people don't celebrate St. Patrick's Day," said Sandy Wang, a native Beijinger. "At least I don't know anyone who does."

Amateur Chinese theater groups welcome all

By Annie Wei

As a city of culture, Beijing isn't short on young people passionate about literature, music and theater, who would rather spend a day rehearsing a play instead of drinking in a bar.

There are quite a few foreign-run amateur theater groups, such as Beijing Playhouse, which gives foreign and Chinese actors their turn on stage; Beijing Actors Workshop, which offers directing, acting and writing classes at 50 yuan a session; and experimental theater groups Beijing Improv and Cheeky Monkey Theater.

There are many more out there if you count Chinese theater groups with more professional members. These, however, are trickier for foreigners to join because of obvious differences in language and culture. But those who are brave enough to try will reap the benefits, such as a deeper understanding of Chinese culture, not to mention a fast-track course in learning Mandarin.

Below are *Beijing Today's* top three picks for Chinese theater and acting groups.

Xixiaotang

This troupe, also called X2 Drama Studio, is the most ambitious and the most successful among Beijing's ama-



Beijing is home to many international youth theater festivals and theater groups. CFP Photo

teur theater groups. It was founded in 2005 by a group of professional stage actors. Within three years, they had performed 2,000 shows of more than 20 plays for a total of 300,000 viewers.

Most of their works focus on the life stories of those born in the 1970s.

Where: A-711 Haitian Shangwu Building, 107 Dongsì Bei Dajie, Dongcheng District
Tel: 6403 0977

Santuoqi

Established 12 years ago,

Santuoqi brings together young people who are interested in experimental theater. Members strive for diversity in theatrical performance and pursue artistic interpretation of "sad humor" and "brilliant imagination."

Some members are from the Central Academy of Drama, the National Academy of Chinese Theater Arts and Renmin University of China.

Where: Xianfeng Theater, 8-2 Dongdan San Tiao, Dongcheng District
Tel: 6270 2700

Compagnie Ningchun

Compared with the two other groups, Ningchun's members have the most professional training. Its founder, Ning Chunyan, is a French-born Chinese who returned to China in 2005 as a professor at Communication University of China. She founded the troupe two years later and has staged a series of popular French plays in Chinese. Her efforts are supported by the French Embassy and other big firms.

Contact: blog.sina.com.cn/comningchun/

Beijing Parkour

By Annie Wei

Parkour enthusiasts will be happy to know that they're not alone – several people get together to practice every week at places like the garden on the east side of The Place and at Workers Stadium.

Created in France in the 1980s, parkour came to China in 2006. It is an urban sport in which runners dodge obstacles at high speeds by using just the body.

"The charm of the sport is feeling so free," said Sun Jie, a gymnastic coach and parkour enthusiast.

The city has a few hundred parkour runners and clubs for different skill levels. Visit urbanmonkey.cn for more information.



CFP Photo

ASK Beijing Today

Email your questions to: weiyi@ynet.com

I'm looking for white furniture finish and paint or varnish that has minimal volatile organic compound emission. Can you give me any leads?

Try the paint brand Auro, which is manufactured in Germany. Its website, china-auro.com, has a comprehensive list of its products; it sells paint for furniture, wooden floors, walls and ceilings and wooden surfaces.

I'm moving to Beijing from Toronto and I'm bringing my dog. Is it going to be a problem finding an apartment that will allow me to him? Getting rid of him is not an option.

This is going to be a huge undertaking. Air China does not accept pets, so look at other airlines. Such a long-distance flight can be traumatizing for a dog; some breeds have trouble breathing in the small luggage space, but you're not allowed to sedate them. Upon reaching China, your pet will have to go through quarantine. You're better off hiring someone to handle the formalities – but it will not come cheap.

Once you pass these hurdles, it won't be too difficult finding an apartment where the landlord allows pets. But you need to live by local pet regulations: dogs with a shoulder height of more than 35 centimeters are not allowed inside Fifth Ring Road. You also need to register your pet with the police. It costs 1,000 yuan for the first year and 500 yuan for each succeeding year.

I bought a piece of silk cloth that I want to make into a qipao. Can you recommend a good dressmaker?

If you're willing to spend the money, we recommend Ruifuxiang, a century-old dress shop renowned for its qipao designs and craftsmanship located on Qianmen Avenue. Call them at 6303 5764 or visit their website, ruifuxiang.cn. For something less pricey, try the tailoring shops on the third floor of Yashow market in Sanlitun. They do a pretty good job too.

(By Wei Ying)

Pathlight headed

Second issue of acclaimed lit mag seeks to build momentum



The Literary Translation Centre always draws a crowd.



A representative from the year's Market Focus country, Russia, hands the banner over to China, the market focus of this year's fair.

Photos provided by The London Book Fair

Abrahamsen, co-founder of the translating consultancy Paper Republic, expressed interest, but nothing happened for a half-year or so. The matter was all but forgotten until last summer, when the idea resurfaced.

Because Abrahamsen was in the US at the time, Vivian Wang, Book Manager at Beijing Bookworm, referred Li to Alice Xin Liu, one of Abrahamsen's friends in Beijing's tight-knit translation community.

After a dinner and some emails, a partnership was forged: People's Literature and Paper Republic would team up for a venture called *Pathlight*, only the second magazine on the mainland – after *Peregrine*, the English-language supplement to Ou Ning's *Chutzpah* – devoted to translated contemporary Chinese fiction and poetry.

"I don't think that the established translations [of Chinese books] published in the West are good enough to represent the wealth of what you'd find if you read Chinese in China," said Liu, the managing editor, who was born in Beijing but emigrated to the UK at the age of 7 before returning in 2007.

"Books nowadays translated into English are marketed in a way that to me is a little bit unappealing because they tend to have the woman in the qipao on the cover, they tend to be about the Cultural Revolution or sexual liberation or they tend to be about

things that don't occur right now," she said. "I acknowledge that all those events need to be explored and written about, but I don't think Western publishers really know what they want."

With that in mind, Liu – with Abrahamsen as the editorial director and a small team of translators – set out to create a magazine that would introduce English readers to writers who might otherwise never gain an international audience.

The first issue, released on November 18, was rushed because of an impending China Writer's Association meeting in Beijing. The final product was flawed – too many published speeches, for instance, and typos that would mortify editors – but most readers didn't seem to mind.

The critical response was overwhelmingly positive. New York's Harper's and London's Granta – among other influential magazines – sought to exchange issues.

"Everyone is interested in Chinese literature, and for some reason this magazine has gotten out even though I haven't taken any foreign press interviews," Liu said. "The overall response has been great."

Building on that momentum

The second issue, which was released last week, takes next month's London Book Fair as its theme. Because this year's book fair focuses on China, about two dozen Chinese writers, editors and officials

are expected to make it to the event on April 16 to 18.

In addition to being 40 pages longer (200 total), the second issue also features a whole new cast of writers.

"This is a really small microcosm of what's out there," Liu said. "People's Lit's been going for 60 years, and they go to (print) every month. And yes, some of the writers will overlap, but they will always have interesting new material."

"I don't think that the established translation [of Chinese books] published in the West are good enough to represent the wealth of what you'd find if you read Chinese in China."

– Alice Xin Liu, the managing editor

They were all chosen by People's Literature, though the English-speaking editorial team selected five to eight of the 13 stories, Liu said.

While the relationship between the Chinese and English sides of the production team has been steady, points of contention have arisen.

The translators believe what they do is an "art and a craft," Liu said, but for People's Lit, "our magazine is just another soft power project, which means because they don't read the lit in English, they only see it as one

By Anthony Tao

More than a year ago, Li Jingze, People's Literature, China's oldest and largest magazine, approached writer and translator Alice Xin Liu with a proposition to launch an English-language publication of translated poetry and prose by contemporary writers. When it finally came to fruition, the result was astounding.



of those politically good projects.

Liu used deadlines as an excuse. "Whereas it might take two months for a translation and three weeks for a manuscript, sometimes her bosses will push everything in one month."

To the other side's credit, they trust our judgment in what we select. Writers will want to read," Liu said.

And everyone is in agreement when it comes to the magazine's principles.

"The problem is we need to increase the number of writers who are interested, so hopefully *Pathlight* will act as a catalyst," she said, referring to a pile of manuscripts.

"I'm very optimistic about it," Liu said. "It's not one of those things where they're going to come to us every day and say you need to either publish this or that here or you need to publish the work of the government's favorite writer or something like that. I think we're really go-

to England

ntum ahead of London Book Fair

editor-in-chief of *Peo-*
most venerable literary
ranslator Eric Abraham-
English-language publi-
se to highlight China's
ally hapened, its success



Eric Abrahamsen, founder of the translation agency Paper Republic



Alice Xiu Lin, managing editor of Pathlight
Photo by Anthony Tao



Han Dong, a poet whose work appears in Pathlight's second issue
Photo by Nicky Harman

quite a bit of flexibility and freedom in picking the content."

Path to credibility

After Pathlight's third issue, slated for May or June, the team expects to receive a periodical ISBN number that will enable newsstands to carry the publication. (Because it currently only has a book ISBN number, its distribution is limited to Sanlian Taofen Bookstore at the National Art Museum of China, the Bookworm and Amazon.cn.)

In addition, Liu said she hopes her work will blaze new trails for the publishing industry.

"At this moment in time, myself and Eric and all the Paper Republic associates, I think we are setting a precedent with everything we do," she said. "We talk to authors and *People's Literature Magazine* about (writers') rights (to translated works) — that's a precedent right now."

They're able to do this largely because of the prominence of Li and Qiu Huadong, *Pathlight's* editorial director. Both born in the '60s, they are prolific and renowned writers in their own rights. Their status within the Chinese Writers' Association, which operates under the auspices of official government agencies, ensures that politicians will pay attention to what they say.

But the flipside to that access is the possibility that foreign readers will be prejudiced against the taint — real or perceived — of government involvement.

"It's a constant problem, and the funny thing is, Qiu Huadong, Li Jingze probably don't think it's a problem," Liu said. "But we should be the partners who do our job to tell them we should limit the official-looking (insignia)."

The first issue, for example, featured heavy-handed speeches as part of the theme, the Mao Dun Literary Prize. The second issue has been scrubbed of these parts in favor of more poetry and prose. The cover also no longer bears the "Foreign Languages Press" logo.

"I'd like to see good translations, to discover more Chinese writers and therefore promote them to the English-speaking world," Liu said. "The integrity is in the quality of the writing."



Pathlight issues 1 and 2



Sculptor's style pure and original



Zhang Runzi



Cai Wenji

By Charles Zhu

Housewife and sculptor Zhang Runzi likes to lead a quiet and undisturbed life.

Nevertheless, she is making a name for herself in the art scene with her clay creations collected in a new album.

She mostly sculpts female figures – lanky, lean and graceful women – carved in simple and fluent lines and decorated in rich and elegant color.

Critics say her sculptures achieve the impossible, instilling softness in the tough and stillness in the moving. Her style is rooted in Chinese artistic tradition and realism – yet these do not confine her. Zhang assimilates the strong parts of foreign art and uses moderate exaggeration and deformation.

She melts them into her personal laconic style in shape, line structure, color and proportion.

Her creative career can be divided into two periods.

Before 1985, she mostly produced colored clay sculptures that were refined and meticulously painted. This style is exemplified by her works “Qu Yuan, Poet of the Chu” and the “Han Figurines.” The poet, with a sword hanging at his waist, is dressed like a gentleman from the Warring States period. In her two Han figurines she pays special attention to the colors. Her decision to deliberately expose the natural color of the clay won praise from many art critics.

From 1985, she shook off her former method of expression and quit focusing so much on color. In her works that imitate colored pottery, she lightly dabs shades of paint on them to produce a beautiful burned glaze effect.

The faces of her new figurines are obscured and their lines turn from soft and curving to straight and forceful. In “Leisure,” she depicts a palace maid in her flowing gown. However, only the barest shape of a face is visible – only the graceful posture helps to convey the figure’s youthful female soul.

Zhang takes her inspiration from the Buddhas painted on the Dunhuang Grotto frescoes and primitive cliff sculptures. The most typical of her works is “The Sitting Buddha,” shrouded in golden shades and offering an impression of a composed mind and a benign feature.

Her subject matter also came to include images of minority ethnic groups, fashion models and fairy tales. The utensils from ancient times also came to her creative attention.

It is believed that Zhang’s colored sculptures are a precious artistic wealth.

“Zhang’s small clay sculptures give people an impression of grandeur. If they were enlarged or are carved in stone or wood, they would still be good pieces,” one critic says.

Zhang attributes her change in artistic expression to aging. “As I get older, I have new ideas about beauty. I try to leave behind my obsession with finesse and gentility and seek something both simple and grandiose.”

She is fairly slow to create, usually taking two weeks to complete a small clay piece.

She continues to take creative ideas from traditional culture and from Chinese and foreign literature.

From her own understanding of Charlotte Brontë’s novel “Jane Eyre,” she created a serious yet gentle English lady dressed in black, with blond hair protruding from her cap. When an Englishman asked to buy the sculpture, Zhang declined.

Zhang never attended art school. She graduated from a nursing school and worked as a teacher until she took ill in 1954. During her illness, she began studying clay sculpture and invented her own style free of the shackles of artistic stereotypes.

Her art has no utilitarian purpose: it is created purely for pleasure.



Jane Eyre



Han Figurines



Qu Yuan

Beatles band rocks Gulou

By Li Yi

The Gulou area is as famous for sightseeing as it is for hosting some of the best musical acts in the capital.

And it's just discovered another.

Last Sunday, Gulou 121 Club hosted the debut performance of "the bacpages," a Beatles tribute band dedicated to spreading their love of classic Brit rock.



The bacpages play their debut set in Gulou.
Photos by Li Yi

The lighting was dim inside Gulou 121 Club. The narrow stage left almost no space between the band and the audience.

The bacpages arrived two hours early to do the sound test on all their guitars. For the members, the sound test was yet another opportunity to show off.

After a short introduction the show started. They played covers of "And I Love Her," "Get Back" and "Here Comes the Sun." Listeners were hard pressed to believe the band was organized less than a year ago.

And in some ways, it wasn't.

The story of the bacpages begins with Xylon, a band the members started in high school,

said Cao Shuonan, the 27-year-old bass player and leader.

Cao, Jiang and Pink attended the same boarding high school. At the time, Internet access was limited and the boys relied on radio and bootleg CDs to get their music fix. Cao, a longtime fan of Beatles songwriter John Lennon, soon learned that his roommates Jiang Yiping and Huang Xuan also liked the Beatles.

Together they decided to found a band.

"We talked about music all day long, practiced in our dorm, shared earphones and transcribed lyrics and solos," said Jiang, the lead guitarist.

Xylon broke up when the three decided to attend different universities: Pink left to study

journalism, Huang to study design and Cao to study law in Japan.

That was where Cao joined a Beatles club. The passion the Japanese students had for the band affected him and inspired him to devote more time to music.

"In Xylon, I was the drummer. Then I started learning guitar. I want to learn more and spread the Beatles' music," he said.

Years later, Cao returned to Beijing, found an office job and sought out his old friends to reorganize the band.

"I had almost given up," Jiang said during the intermission. "But [Cao's] passion really moved me. My job keeps me very busy, but I decided to join – I don't want to have any regrets

in my youth."

The band's name was taken from "My Back Page," a song by Bob Dylan that he performed in concert with George Harrison of the Beatles.

While preparing for their stage debut, the group was invited in October to perform at a photo exhibition in 798 Art Zone. The afternoon show packed a 200-square-meter hall with more than a hundred fans.

It's that magnetism that helps them get their message out.

Cao, Jiang and Pink typify their generation. Born in the 1980s, they are dedicated to friendship and chasing their dreams. They hope their performances will introduce more listeners to the music of the Beatles.

Balcony gardening

By Annie Wei

Many urbanites are falling in love with balcony gardens. This week, *Beijing Today* introduces some tips to help you start growing your own food at home.

Location

Windows or balconies that face south are best, because plants will get a full day of sunshine. Balconies facing north may be too cold for herbs and vegetables, and may require an extra lamp.

Balconies facing west are not suitable for plants that don't like sun, such as lemon balm.

Soil

If you ever buy plants from local flower markets, especially plants that are uncommon, like lemon trees or banana trees, they will attract worms even if you use pesticides. The problem comes from the soil where the worm eggs incubate. When you buy plants, we suggest buying clean soil. Try the store lehuojia.taobao.com, where you can pick fertilized soil (6.8 yuan for 1,000 grams), strawberry, lettuce and tomato seeds, as well as other tools for home gardening.

Organic pesticides

Even after you have purchased high-temperature processed soils, if it's improperly preserved, there is a chance of it growing mold or worms. You have to learn how to deal with these pests. Watch your plants, especially the backs of leaves. As you are growing herbs and vegetables, we suggest you not use chemical pesticides, but organic ones.

Pryethrin, an active ingredient for organic agriculture, is available at shop69287691.taobao.com and costs between 35 and 500 yuan.

Or you can mix a small spoon of minced garlic, washing powder, 5 milliliters of olive oil and 500 milliliters of water and spray it on plants two to three times a day.

Sprouts instead of seeds

Plant seeds are easy to purchase online or from flower markets. However, not all plants grow well from seeds. For example, basil seeds are easy to grow, but not rosemary or lavender. For the latter, you need to place the seeds on a box and cover them with a moist towel. We suggest you search for more information online or talk to the vendor before you purchase.

Plants for spring

To make sure your plants grow better, we suggest you to plant seasonally. Spring is the best time for plants like thyme, mint, basil and rosemary. Many people like lemon-grass, but it is more suitable for summer.



Pumpkin flowers are delicious but seldom available at local markets.

CFP Photos



Planting an edible garden is the new trend for eating safe.

Spicy food at Sanlitun Soho

By Annie Wei

For diners who are looking for spicy hotpot in Sanlitun, look no further than Rijin Restaurant.

The owners – a couple surnamed Wang – like spicy food and started the restaurant to specialize in Sichuan and Hunan dishes.

The most recommended dish is couguiyu (158 yuan), mandarin fish with a strong aroma. Couguiyu was originally from Anhui, but it became popular in Hunan restaurants. Two hundred years ago, Couguiyu was marinated with layers of salt to prevent it from turning bad during transportation. The fish's skin would give out a slightly rotten smell, but after cleaning and stir-frying, it would be surprisingly tender and delicious.

Most restaurants don't prepare their own couguiyu, but purchase from suppliers. At Rijin, the chefs will buy fresh mandarin fish from the market and marinate them.

Rijin excels at other typical spicy Sichuan and Hunan dishes: Chongqing laziji (68 yuan), deep-fried chicken with chili peppers, Sichuan peppercorn, ginger and garlic served on a big plate; ganchao xiaohexia (48 yuan), deep-fried river shrimp; gangue feichang (48 yuan), praised by Sichuan diners who like pork intestines.

The restaurant also provides Cantonese dim sum and milk tea and delivers around the Sanlitun neighborhood at all hours.

Rijin Restaurant

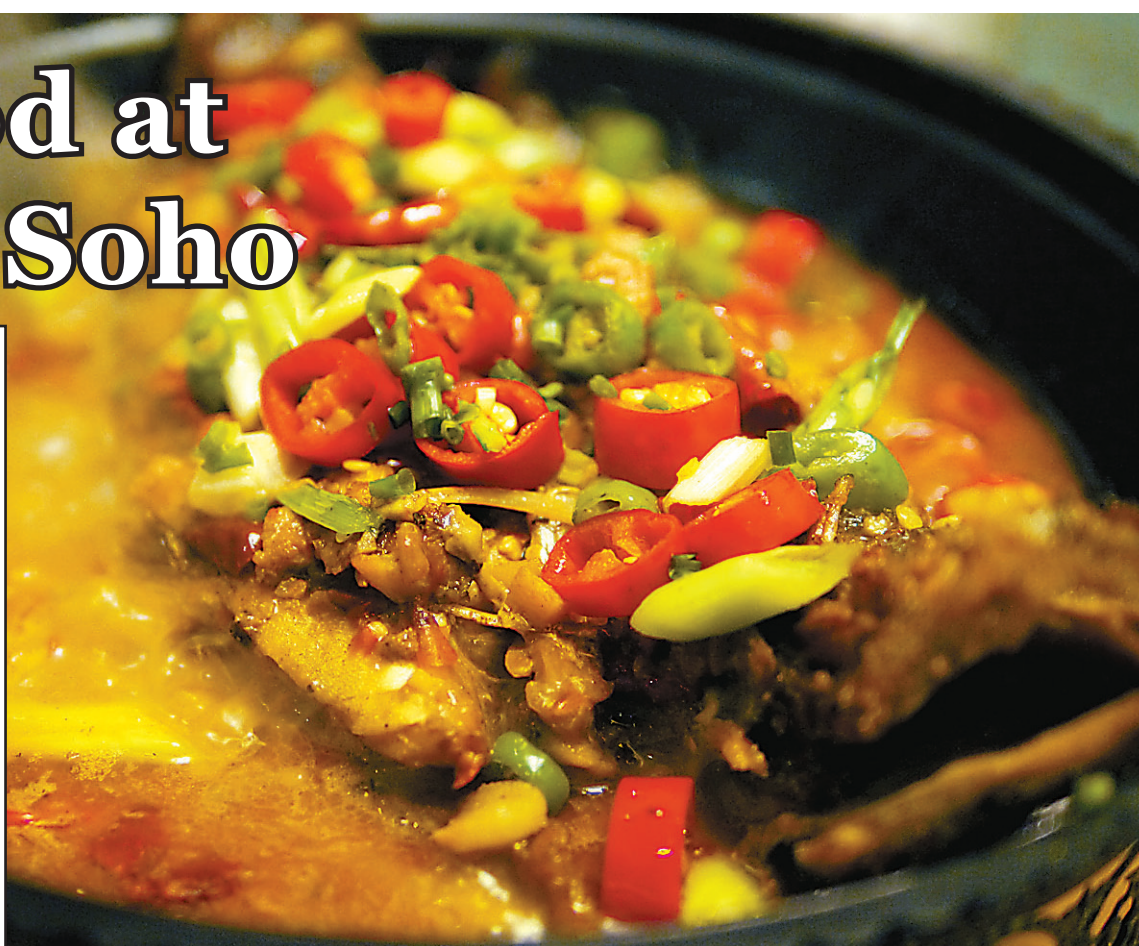
Where: Room 3311, No. 3 Shopping Mall, Sanlitun SOHO, Sanlitun Gongti Bei Lu, Chaoyang District

Open: 24 hours

Tel: 15726642014



Spicy oyster, price to be determined



Aromatic mandarin fish, 158 yuan

Photos by Xia Jun



Roasted duck, starting from 68 yuan

Photos by Alice Zheng

Stewed chicken and pork, price to be determined

New eatery and noodle bar at World Summit

By Annie Wei

Targeting office workers in the central business district who are increasingly worried about food safety, the restaurant Hongguan and a noodle bar has its official opening on the fourth floor of Guomao Shopping Mall today.

The restaurant mainly offers cuisines from Beijing and Guangdong. The price versus quality makes it a valuable spot for this area.

For example: the crispy pork belly (68 yuan), a typical Guangdong dish with three layers of pork texture – crispy skin, a thin layer of fat and slim meat – is a good value. The marinated chicken with rose wine and soy sauce (78 yuan for half chicken), barbecued pork in honey sauce (58 yuan) and barbecued roasted suckling pig (58 yuan per person) are also good.

We recommend deep-fried tofu in Hakka style (38 yuan). Chef Andy Zhu said the restaurant uses bottled purified water and yellow beans to make its own tofu, which comes out soft and tender. The tofu is then wrapped with flour powder and deep-fried. It's seasoned with salt and pepper. For northern diners who prefer stronger flavors, it offers a saltwater dip.

Vegetable dishes range from 28 yuan to 48 yuan.

We also love its dim sum (20 to 30 yuan) and dessert: steamed egg white and milk with red bean (28 yuan), coconut sherbet with strawberry and gula Melaka (38 yuan), sweet coconut and red bean cake (28 yuan) and cream and soja red beans (22 yuan).

Hongguan is near a noodle bar. Right now it serves 10 popular noodles (38 yuan each, with

one gravy and up to four condiments), including Shanxi knife-cut noodles, pinched noodles, spinach noodles, bean noodles and Beijing handmade noodles. The gravy includes classics such as pork and mushroom, egg and tomato, stir-fried diced pork with yellow bean sauce and sour soup.

There is a saying about Shanxi noodles that one ball of dough can be transformed into hundreds of types of noodles. The chefs are from Shanxi and make the noodles authentically. This is the place to go for noodle lovers.

Drinks and coffee are served at competitive prices. The Hong Kong milk tea (16 yuan) and cappuccino (20 yuan) are favorites.

Hongguan and noodle bar

Where: 4F, Guomao Shopping Mall, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie, Chaoyang District

Open: 11 am – 9 pm



Deep-fried tofu in Hakka style, 38 yuan

Dining

French wines a breath of nobility

Chateau de la Dauphin, Fronsac, a Bordeaux wine maker with royal roots, has recently released its "Chateau de la Dauphin" and "Delphis" labels in the Chinese market.

The wines, sold under the Chinese names "Du Fei Jiu Zhuang" and "Xiao Du Fei," are intended to strengthen the chateau's presence in the fast-growing market and bring it closer links to the Chinese consumer. The Chinese names are related to princess and little princess.

"The names we have created in Chinese is are perfect representation of our wines and the environment that surrounds the chateau: noble, elegant and feminine," said Guillaume Halley, owner of Chateau de La Dauphine.



Marie-Jospehe de Saxe, wife of Dauphin Louis Ferdinand de France, heir to the throne of France, lived in the chateau after it was built in 1750 and lent her name, La Dauphine, to the estate.

"Our Chinese guests have been delighted to discover the estate and to learn about the story behind the wine," Halley said.

In recent years, the chateau has attracted dozens of Chinese visitors and wine professionals keen

on quality wines that are accessible and can be enjoyed in a majestic setting.

Chinese distributors include Watson's Wine Cellar in Hong Kong and Delphis – BSW Wine.

Easter celebration at China World Hotel, Beijing

Get a head start on the Easter holiday and drop by The Sweet Spot this April for a scrumptious selection of gourmet Easter eggs and chocolates. The Easter Sunday brunch at Scene a Café offers fun for the whole family, as does the chocolate afternoon high tea at the Lobby Lounge.

On April 8, bring the family to Scene a Cafe for a fun-filled, festive Easter Sunday brunch celebration. Exciting treats are in store for children, including a personal appearance by the Easter Bunny, a colorful children's playground and an Easter egg painting and bunny dough making class.

Scene's brunch will be overflowing with succulent seafood and festive favorites. On Easter Sunday, the brunch includes free fruit juice, Easter Bunny smoothies, soft drinks and house wine.

Where: Scene a Cafe, China World Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie

When: April 8

Cost: Easter brunch 488 yuan for adults or 244 yuan for children (15 percent gratuity)

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 35, or call the reservations center at 6505 5838

Wagyu beef heaven

Aria Restaurant promises a memorable dining experience with premium Wagyu beef, jet fresh from David Blackmore in Australia.

Savor highlights such as Blackmore's 9+ Topside Tar Tar, Wagyu Beef Carpaccio and Wagyu Sirloin.

The set dinner menu includes canapés, mustard burgers served with seared foie gras, black tomatoes and Yunnan truffles; amuse-bouche, Blackmore's 9+ topside tar tar, served with cornichons, capers and mustard ice cream.

The appetizer is Blackmore's 9+ tenderloin carpaccio served with grain mustard, quail



eggs and abalone mushrooms. The starter is cured wagyu served with poached prawns, seared scallops and sweet corn. For the main course, enjoy Blackmore's 9+ wagyu sirloin served with coffee, roast garlic and bone marrow.

Dessert offerings include cheesecake, rum, strawberries, pistachio and caramel cream.

Where: Aria, China World

Hotel, 1 Jianguomen Wai Dajie

When: April 1-30

Cost: set dinner menu 1,588 yuan per person with one glass of champagne

Tel: 6505 2266 ext. 36

Hotel



Swiss design and craftsmanship for doormen at Swissotel Hotels and Resorts

The doormen at Swissotel Hotels & Resorts have new eye-catching new uniforms.

Prominent Swiss fashion designer Ida Gut created an original doorman's uniform for the international hotel chain to reflect its Swiss roots and dedication to quality.

"Doormen are a hotel's calling card and the first people guests come in contact with," says Lilian Roten, vice president of operations. "We are delighted that the new uniform reflects the individuality of Swiss craftsmanship and our dedication to quality."

The new uniforms draw on Switzerland's textile and craft heritage and reinterpret it to meet the needs and requirements of the hotel chain.



Michael Zhou new sales director at Sunworld Dynasty

Sunworld Dynasty Hotel has appointed Michael Zhou as its new director of Sales and Marketing at the 395-room hotel in Wangfujing, Beijing.

Zhou will be responsible for driving the overall marketing strategy and overseeing the daily operations of sales, PR, revenue and catering and use his expertise to enhance the hotel's reputation as a leader in luxury.

Drawing on a wealth of experience spanning more than 15 years in the Intercontinental Hotels Group as DOS and DOSM, Zhou will inject new vitality into the hotel's management, provide warm and sincere service with his sales team and maintain and develop the success of the hotel business.

(By Jackie Zhang)

Lessons

Afternoon prep classes aid HSK students

Frontiers School will start new afternoon group classes for students who are preparing for the HSK.

Six levels of instruction will be available. Students who are preparing for the HSK examination are advised to sign up.

Class Schedule: Monday to Friday

Class Time: 2-4 pm

Price: 60 yuan per hour, or 2,400 yuan for 40 hours in one month

Material: New HSK Books

Where: 3F, 30 Dongzhong Jie, Dongzhimen Wai, Dongcheng District

Tel: 18201648211

Brand

FREYWILLE unveils Pashmina in new cashmere, silk blend

The new Pashmina Double Face – available in electric blue, tart coral, cheerful fuchsia, vibrant violet, canary yellow, baby blue and Mediterranean turquoise – are made from the finest fabrics and are a fabulous addition to the Magic Sphinx collection.

Each dual-faced print is fashioned for a versatile edge. The Pashmina Double Face can be tied around the neck, elegantly wrapped over for a statement or delicately draped off the shoulders to accentuate one's favorite jewelry.



Fri, Mar. 23

Documentary Nanking

Based on the famous novel by Iris Chang, this documentary tells the story of the Rape of Nanking from a foreigner's perspective. It made headlines at the Sun-

dance Film Festival in 2007 due to its sensitive topic. Through interviewing numerous survivors and eyewitnesses, the director shows the brutal treatment of the inhabitants of Nanking in 1937 at the hands of the Japanese army.

The director, Academy Award-winning Bill Guttentag, will be

invited to speak with the audience afterwards.

Where: Broadway Cinematheque, 1 Xiangheyuan Lu, Dongzhimen, Chaoyang District

When: 7:30-10 pm

Admission: 40 yuan, 30 yuan for students and the elderly

Tel: 8438 8258 ext. 8001



Sat, Mar. 24



Nightlife

Goodbye, Beijing's Winter

It's time to say goodbye to the winter of 2011, a time of sorrow and happiness, love and loss. Brit-Box is an indie musician and folk singer who wishes to lead the audience into the new year with his original lyrics and graceful folk tunes.

Where: Blue Goat, 3 Shuimo Xinqu (200 meters north of west gate of Tsinghua University), Haidian District

When: 8:30-10:30 pm

Admission: 30 yuan, 20 yuan for students

Tel: 6265 5069

Exhibition

MONT SAINTE-VICTOIRE Li Ran Solo Exhibition

The name of Li Ran's exhibition comes from a mountain in southern France that artist Paul Cezanne could see from his studio. During his lifetime, Cezanne painted the mountain dozens of times. Li tries to build modernist aesthetics whilst looking at fragmented experiences grounded in our own history. There will be a live performance as the artist mimicks the voices of actors from Chinese movies of the 1970s and '80s.

Where: Magician Space, 798 Dongjie, 798 Art Centre, 2 Jiuxianqiao Lu, Chaoyang District

When: Daily until March 25, 3:30-6 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 8459 9635



一村一寨一針一線



Sun, Mar. 25

Culture Salon One Needle One Thread

The ethnic Miao, located in south-western China, are skillful historians of their culture, using embroideries as a way to record history.

Tomoko Torimaru, a Japanese scholar, was inspired by her mother to spend several years interviewing Miao

villages in Guizhou Province. Apart from hearing abundant colorful stories, she also learned how to embroider. At this salon, she will present her understanding of the Miao embroidery.

Where: Orenda Tribe, Shuanxiu Park, 20 Bei Sanhuan Zhonglu, Haidian District

When: 7-9 pm

Admission: Free

Tel: 4008 885 597

Exhibition

Invisible Cities: Craig Kirk Solo Exhibition

Kirk is a British freelance photographer whose photos are simple and colorful, a result of using cross-processed slide film to capture sunny days. He uses colors to portray the world in a way that is normally unseen to create a real-life cartoon of the cities we live in.

The title of his exhibition comes from a book title by Italian writer Italo Calvino, which features dialogue between Marco Polo and Kublai Khan.

Where: CCD 300 Modern Art and Design Center, 300 Caochangdi, Chaoyang District

When: Daily until April 15, 1-5 pm

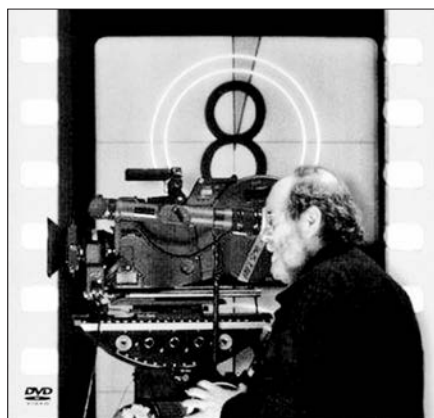
Admission: Free

Tel: 6432 9300

Mon, Mar. 26



Tue, Mar. 27



Documentary

Stanley Kubrick: A Life in Pictures

Stanley Kubrick: A Life in Pictures is a 2001 documentary about the life and work of the legendary director made by his longtime assistant and brother-in-law, Jan Harlan. It consists of several 15-minute chapters, each detailing the making of one of his films – and two more showing his childhood and life.

Harlan managed to get many of Kubrick's collaborators for interviews, including Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman, Keir Dullea, Arthur C. Clarke, Malcolm McDowell, Peter Ustinov, Jack Nicholson, Gyorgy Ligeti and Matthew Modine. It also features interviews from film directors who were inspired by Kubrick, such as Woody Allen, Steven Spielberg, Martin Scorsese and Sydney Pollack.

The film contains rare footage taken from the Kubrick family home videos and on film sets, and clips from *Fear and Desire*, Kubrick's first feature and his only film that has yet to see a commercial home entertainment release.

Where: No. 3 Club, 43 Beisanhuan Xi Lu, Haidian District

When: 7:30-10 pm

Admission: 15 yuan

Tel: 8211 5288

Wed, Mar. 28

Drama

I Am Ann

Stefan Zweig was an Austrian novelist, playwright, journalist and biographer. At the height of his literary career in the 1920s and 1930s, he was one of the most famous writers in the world. The drama *I Am Ann* was created based on Zweig's famous novel, *Letter from an Unknown Woman*, and *The World of Yesterday* in honor to the 20th anniversary of his death. In this drama, Zweig and characters of his novels meet and are fused through the interplay between dreams and reality.

Where: TNT Theater, Nine Theater, Chaoyang Cultural Center, 17 Jintaili, Chaoyang District

When: Daily until April 8, 7:30-11:30 pm

Admission: 60-280 yuan

Tel: 8599 6011

Thu, Mar. 29



Nightlife Song of Caves

The Dong, or Kam People, are internationally renowned for their polyphonic choir called Kam Grand Choir, which has been listed by UNESCO as a world-class intangible cultural heritage since 2009. Song of Caves, a representative work of Kam Grand Choir, will be performed.

Where: 7 Dongmianhua Hutong, Jiadaokou Nan Dajie, Dongcheng District

When: 8-11 pm

Admission: 80 yuan, 60 yuan pre-sale

Tel: 6401 5269

(By Zhang Yuting)

Finding the undiscovered world and oneself

By Wu Hao

At the Ullens Center for Contemporary Arts lecture hall at 798 Art Zone last Saturday, Ma Nan spoke about her travels in Japan, waving a hand fractured in Laos earlier this year.

Ma, a native Beijinger who speaks rapidly and with a local accent, said she wants to be known as a storyteller. The lecture's host, meanwhile, described her as a stand-up comedian. Either way, listeners were able to sit back and enjoy.

At the end of the hour-long talk, Ma said, "No matter what you've heard about a place from others, that's just their stories. You have to go out and find your own."



Monks in Laos Photos provided by Ma Nan

The steep slopes of Laos

Ma went from Yunnan Province to Laos earlier this year, traveling 50 kilometers every day on bumpy mountain roads boxed in by deep valleys.

She said she had never been afraid of death until she was in Laos and saw the plunging slopes. "I realized that I don't want to die," she said.

But Ma left with favorable impression of the country. She said Laotians are never on time when you need expect them, but always there when you don't. On a rainy day, her boyfriend's bike broke down, and just as they were crouching to fix it, four Laotian boys appeared out of nowhere to give them a hand.

Kind and hard-working Japanese old man

In 2003, Ma decided to stay in Japan for a few days to escape the peak of the SARS scare in Beijing. She took a train to the Inland Sea. When it pulled in, she noticed the station was in an antique style, and the faraway mountains glowed with the sunset. She decided to get off at this small city called Onomichi.

She walked into a nikuman shop called "Long River," which had dark-red enameled pottery and photos of china placed here and there. She asked an old man if he was Chinese, and he walked over and smiled and said slowly, "My name is Yasunori Hattori. I'm Japanese. I'm learning Chinese."

He asked his friends to all come over because they were all learning Chinese.

An old man named Fukuda invited Ma to stay at his place. Fukuda and his wife, who are both in their 70s, own a small fish shop. Every day they load the fish and put them on the shelves one by one, and enthusiastically

greet every customer.

"Why don't you find someone to help?" Ma asked.

The old man replied, "Japan is so small, with limited resources. If we don't work, the country will lose its future. We want to be a model for young people to work as long as we can."

Ma spent six days in Onomichi and didn't have to spend any money.

When she left, they told her that they hope she can help Chinese understand how Japanese people really are.

"The most valuable things I've gotten during my trips are my experiences with the various people I meet," she said. "They seem to come to me with a mission. Someone comes to help, someone comes to encourage, someone comes to remind you to treasure what you already have."

A reminder of what to treasure

Once, in Bali, Ma met a young boy named Jacob when waiting for a taxi to go to the airport.

He was wearing a black cloth with sleeves rolled up to his shoulder, had blond hair, a tattoo on his arm, nose rings and earrings.

"The only way you can catch the plane is to get on my motorcycle," he said.



Attractions in Japan

Ma saw that Jacob was a rebellious teenager with a good heart, so she believed him.

The next time she went to Kuta Beach, she lodged at Jacob's inn. They spent several days sitting by the beach, drinking beer and chatting aimlessly before Ma went on to Lombok.

When she got back, lively Kuta Beach was deathly silent. Ma



Traveler's file – Ma Nan

Ma began traveling immediately after college, and has seen more than 40 countries, mostly in Europe and around the Asia Pacific region.

She said traveling has made her braver and more open-minded. The way she describes it, she feels herself becoming smaller and smaller with each new place she sees, until at last she is an empty house ready to accept whatever she encounters, not with surprise but with understanding.



instantly knew something must have happened. She couldn't find Jacob.

A suicide bombing had killed dozens, she learned. Jacob was one of the victims.

When Ma left for Lombok, Jacob had said to her, "Come back safely, I have many things to talk to you about."

"Someone wanted to open his heart to me, but suddenly he was gone," Ma said. "That was painful."

Dialogue

Beijing Today (BT): How do you cover the cost of traveling?

Ma: I was a freelance tour guide for four years after I graduated in 1995. Then I got compensation money because they demolished my home, and I used some of the money to buy an apartment and the rest for traveling. Now I do a bit of everything: sometimes I'm a tour guide or writer, or I design routes for companies. I'm not wealthy, but I choose to spend my money on different

things. I live a modest life, don't go to pubs or buy anything luxurious.

I chose this lifestyle because I don't want to bind myself, either in work, life or mind.

BT: Some think traveling is a remedy for the heart. What do you think?

Ma: I don't think traveling is a panacea. You shouldn't travel for the purpose of purifying your soul. If it worked, then we could send every prisoner to Tibet. If you travel to run away from your problems, then it won't work.